

EXTRA The Bee EXTRA

EARLINGTON, HOPKINS COUNTY, KENTUCKY, MONDAY, JUNE 7, 1897.

A CONCERTED MOVEMENT

Of All Hopkins County Miners for
Restoration of Old Rate
Where Reductions

HAVE BEEN MADE.

Large Meeting at Earlington Saturday of Delegations From All Mines.

TWO BRASS BANDS AND MANY SPEAKERS.

Moderation and Good Order the Watchword, and Persuasion the Only Means to Be Used.

THE CONDITIONS FAVORABLE FOR RESTORATION.

Operators Have Assured Their Men That Advance Shall Be Made as Soon as All Agree to Advance.

Earlington was full of music and miners on Saturday. Both are indigenous to the soil and the presence of hundreds of miners and the sound of the music of military bands was anything but unusual. But there was one great difference between this aggregation of miners and music and the usual throngs of people that crowd our halls, streets and parks on gala occasions. This was no gala occasion. With scarce an exception these men came in the spirit of soberness and moderation. They came in peace and with hands of music. But they came with profound sympathy for their fellow men and to discuss and counsel together to devise means for the relief of the distress of some among their number. The feeling of self protection was no small factor either. It is a question of wages, and the miners in this district realize that unless a restoration of the old standard price to pick miners is effected in those places where the wages have been reduced there must inevitably come, at some time, and perhaps soon, a general reduction throughout the whole district.

The St. Charles delegation came in before dinner, in several wagons, some 50 or more men headed by their own brass band composed of miners. Crabtree came with some 25 or more men. Barnesley, Hecla, Monarch and Reinecke mines were each represented by more or less numerous delegations. The Earlington Colored Band composed of colored miners turned out in the afternoon and took part with the St. Charles band in filling the air with music. The St. Charles band occupied the band stand and the colored band played on the opposite corner of Main and Railroad. At a few minutes before 2 o'clock, the bands marched to Masonic Hall which was quickly filled with miners, anxious and willing to do all in

to visit the mines where the reduction was in effect and get delegations to the Saturday meeting, and a committee to solicit subscriptions for the relief of those miners who were without the means of making a living. James McManus reported that he and B. Dunning, committee, had visited Providence and Monarch and asked for delegations of miners. J. B. Hawkins reported that he and Wm. Morris, committee, had raised \$57 dollars among Earlington miners and friends, and added: "The miners who are needy can get grub through the St. Bernard store. We haven't got money but we have got credit and we can give them grub."

The Monarch representatives reported that they had held a meeting on Friday night and that the men agreed that they wanted to do what they could to get the 62½ cent rate, but that they were opposed to a strike. They said furthermore that a strike on their part was unnecessary, since they had the promise of their employers that they would restore the old rate without hesitation as soon as the other operators who had reduced would also agree to and restore the old rate. James McManus reported from Hecla that Col. Foard, he knew, would be one of the first men in the State to want to restore wages and that he had told his men that he would pay 62½ cents as soon as the other operators paid it. Barnesley's men seem divided against themselves but all who spoke from that mine said they wanted the old rate, and that it should be paid as quickly as a restoration was effected at the other mines.

Every miner who spoke laid the responsibility of the present situation at the door of the Providence Coal Company, where the first reduction was made to the miners, saying that the other reductions which have followed on this road have had justification in the fact that Providence was mining and selling coal at less rates than other operators and demoralizing the market as well as the miners' wages. Upon this point the miners were a unit as they were upon the point that unless the rates are restored at those mines where reductions have been made there must come sooner or later a general reduction throughout the district.

Richard Palmer, of St. Charles, said: "In regard to the 62½ cent rate I think all should make a stand for the advance to that rate. We of St. Charles have no kick except for our interest in our fellowmen, we have no grievance, but if this thing keeps on we will have to come down. If there was anything to gain, if any more coal could be shipped out of these valleys under the reduction, it would be some inducement, but not a pound more will be mined and shipped than if the old rate is paid." He advised a general stand for the 62½ cents per ton and thought there would be little difficulty in securing what the miners want under such circumstances. He also counseled moderation and sober action as the only plan that could win.

John Baker, of Barnesley, one of the directors of the Co-operative Coal Company, and a pick miner, said that the Barnesley miners were digging coal for 2 cents a bushel; that they had received 2½ and 3 cents until the market was cut so that the company were compelled

to reduce the price. He said: "We all are aware how it began. It began at Providence. Then others followed so that our Secretary is not able to pay 2½ and 3 cents until these prices are generally paid and coal advanced on the market."

W. P. Ward, of Crabtree, said: "I was one among the first to start the ball to rolling. Carbondale cut from 2½ to 2 cents one month ago. We fellows came together by moonshine and agreed to visit Carbondale and ask a restoration. I have always stood for good wages but always ready to do with reason. We now have Carbondale in line and they are paying 2½ cents. We persuaded and begged them to stand for the advance and we are feeding men who lost work over it. Don't go back to Providence but stop it where it is and don't let it get further. If every mine in America should reduce no more coal could be mined, and neither the operator nor the miner is benefitted by a reduction. Let us use only honorable means as honest men. I was raised in Eastern Kentucky where they didn't know what law was. They don't know yet. And I had to get out of that country in order to remain a good citizen. Come out like men and demand 2½ cents. We can win. The leading operators are opposed to the reduction. Carbondale has restored but the others have not. Let us cure the cases near us then go to the chronic case—Providence."

C. E. Jones and J. M. Victory were the only men not miners who had anything to say. They took occasion to speak well of those operators who have maintained the old rate of mining, and essayed some suggestions to the miners. Numerous miners other than those quoted spoke more or less to the point, and some attempted to bring into the question other things beside the vital consideration of the reduced rate to miners, but these were exceptions and the idea generally prevailed that the only remedy lay in a restoration of the old rate where reduction had been made. Some feeling tributes were paid to those operators who have maintained and are paying the standard rate.

Numerous motions were made before the body could decide what would be most expedient. The motion that finally prevailed was offered by John Baker, of Barnesley, and amended by W. F. Ward, of Crabtree, which as amended is as follows: "That this body demand 2½ cents for digging 80 pounds of screened lump coal in summer and 3 cents for digging 80 pounds of screened lump coal in winter, uniformly throughout this district. And that the miners from each place represented today where the rate has been reduced act as a committee to call their men together and get them to agree to stand for the advance, then to notify their Superintendents of their determination to work no longer at less than 2½ cents, and to get if possible a statement in writing from the operators agreeing to advance the rate if all other operators who have reduced will advance, then report to this body, when a general meeting will be called to take action in regard to Providence."

A general committee was appointed consisting of W. F. Ward, James McManus, Frank Ivey, J. B. Hawkins, Thomas Spencer and F. C. Chambers, to whom reports should be made.

Mr. J. J. McGregor, chairman of the meeting, desires THE BEE to return thanks for him to the miners for the very excellent good order and attention given throughout the meeting.

As is well known THE BEE has

ever stood for the interests of the coal miner and ever worked for the maintenance of the old rate of mining, and THE BEE now extends its sympathy to the miners who are working for a restoration where this rate has been cut. The conditions seem ripe for a speedy and amicable settlement where difference exists. The operators in good faith have assured their men that they are ready to join in a general advance—with the single exception of Providence where the men have not approached the company. And the men in the spirit of soberness and moderation are asking the advance with resort to no means but reason and persuasion.

In THE BEE of April 9, 1896, we commented editorially upon the situation, then beginning to look serious, out of which the present conditions have grown, and showed that neither miner, operator nor anybody else but the consumer was benefitted by a reduction of the rate and that the community at large suffered. THE BEE has spoken frequently to the same point. We reproduce the editorial of above date to show the then existing conditions which have remained about the same with the exception that the rate for mining has been reduced at other places since that time.

No Reason for a Reduction.
(From THE BEE, April 9, 1896)

There are at work some serious disturbances to the coal miner and mine laborer in the Western Kentucky field. A number of mine owners have reduced the price paid the miner from 20 per cent to 35

per cent. Others have tried to do this but failed, the miners very justly claiming that there exists no good reason for any reduction in the price of minelabor at this time.

With the exception of Nashville, Tenn., there has been no reduction in the prices at which Western Kentucky coal is sold in the various markets for the past two years.

Nashville buys but 11 per cent. of the coal produced by the Western Kentucky field. Louisville, which buys 22 per cent. of the coal produced, now pays 25 per cent. per ton more for lump coal than one year ago. All local coal brings the mine owner more money than one year ago.

Has not the miner good reason for objecting to less pay? It is hardly fair to ask him to reduce all his labor 20 to 35 per cent. simply because of low prices in Nashville, which consumes but 11 per cent. of his product, and in the face of better prices elsewhere.

Such reduction in wages means a loss to the laborer and miner of the Western Kentucky field of about \$326,000 annually, and it also means a loss of revenue to the mine owner of an equal sum, since the prices of the product to him must necessarily be reduced as wages to the miner are reduced. Only the consumer will profit by this stint of the miners' wages.

The loss of the miner is the loss of every man in the district. Take away from this coal field this amount of money now paid the mine employees, and not only is the miner robbed of just so much cash, but every citizen—farmer, banker, mechanic or what not—would feel and must help to bear the loss.

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